



# Normanhurst School

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## HEADMISTRESS

Mrs Jacqueline Job B.SC., M.Ed., CMgr FCMI, NPQH

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3 September 2024

Dear Parents

### Re: **September 2024 Headmistress's Letter**

I hope that you enjoyed a well-deserved summer break with your friends and families, whether you have travelled or simply had a staycation. We are looking forward to welcoming all pupils back to school tomorrow on Wednesday 4 September.

During the holidays the maintenance, office and teaching staff have been busy getting the school ready for the new academic year, seeing many carpets replaced and redecoration happening across the school.

#### **Award Success**

We were awarded the Gold TFL Schools Award in recognition of setting high standards while inspiring the school community and others to transform their travel habits. This is a super achievement and I would like to congratulate our student leaders and staff for the commitment towards this endeavour.

#### **Fundraising for Charity**

At the end of last term at the sponsored walk we managed to raise £1,201.23 for GOSH and Rays of Sunshine. Congratulations to the school community for their sponsorship and for walking at such pace. Both charities are very worthy causes.

#### **Welcoming our New Pupils**

The Year 7 classes came into school today for the second part of their school induction. They had time with their form tutors and some of the new student leadership team, getting to know the school better and being allocated their lockers and timetables. The pupils also participated in a variety of team building and problem-solving activities, which encouraged them to get to know each other. Please could I remind the Year 7 classes to bring their Summer Challenge work/project into school by Friday 6 September; I am looking forward to seeing these.

Seniors joining other year groups will have a member of their class to help them settle into Normanhurst school life. The form tutor has a central role, so please contact them if you have any questions. Likewise, please encourage your child to talk to their form tutor who will want to support them pastorally.

New pupils joining Normanhurst from Year 1 to Year 6 have a 'buddy' to help them settle into school, and the class teachers are available every afternoon for a brief chat when they bring the children out to meet you at the end of the day. Alternatively, they are very happy to arrange a meeting or call to talk to you, if this is easier. Please bring your child to the gate in the morning where there will be a member of staff to welcome your child and direct them to their class. The class teacher will be waiting in the classroom ready to meet the children.

Every form in the seniors has a prefect linked to it and the prefect team and school leaders will be helping the new pupils to feel at home over the next few weeks.

Settling-in reports will be sent home for new pupils after three weeks and for Year 7 parents there is the opportunity to meet the teachers informally at a Parents' Meeting on Tuesday 24 September at 5pm. This meeting will also include a short presentation on your child's assessment journey. We hope you and your child will all be able to join us.

### Information update

You will be receiving a number of emails requesting information over the next 7 days. Please complete these as soon as possible to ensure we have the most up-to-date contact details and medical information for your child.

It is a requirement that all schools have at least two emergency contacts who would be available if needed during the school day. We also need to know if your child's medical information has changed or if they have any food allergies or intolerances. Please ensure that we have this important information by Monday 9 September, including the hospital or GP notes to confirm any medical needs. Parents can update these details by logging onto the portal.

If parents are away for any reason during term time and your children are being looked after by relatives, you should notify the office and class teacher with the name and contact details of the relative - in advance, so that we know who has responsibility for your child while you are away.

If you have any questions or concerns about the information, contact the school office and a member of the team will be happy to assist you.

### Staffing update

As some staff have been appointed in new positions and we welcome new staff to the school, I thought it may be helpful to re-share this information with parents.

The Senior Leadership Team is as follows:

- Mr Clair – Head of Seniors – with responsibility for Curriculum, Key Stage Three Pastoral Care and Satchel One (SMHW).
- Miss Stone – Head of Juniors – with responsibility for junior Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Pastoral Care for the Juniors.
- Mrs Saint - Assistant Head across the school – with responsibility for Pupil Mental Health, Health and Safety, PSHE and Key Stage 4 Pastoral Care.
- Ms Jass – Assistant Head Seniors – with responsibility for senior Teaching and Learning, more able opportunities and achievement and progress in the seniors.
- Mr Masters - Assistant Head Juniors – with responsibility for junior Teaching and Learning and Pastoral Care.

All members of the senior leadership are Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) along with Mrs Lafferty, SENDCo, and I am the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the school including EYFS.

This year we have four Heads of House:

- Miss Rudman – Ridgeway House
- Mrs Scott - Forest House
- Mr Marsden – Buxton House
- Mr Botha – Rangers House

Other members of staff with new responsibilities are:

- Mr Davies will be the Junior Maths Coordinator
- Mrs Houssein will be a Teaching Assistant and Dyslexia Specialist Teacher

I would like to welcome the following new members of staff:

- Miss Bungaradu is an experienced TA joining the TA team.
- To the Seniors, we welcome Miss Mahmood, Teacher of Maths. Miss Mahmood taught GCSE Maths and provided 1-2-1 or small group Maths support.

We would like to wish all members of staff the best of luck in their new roles and in settling into Normanhurst this academic year.

### **GCSE Success**

Normanhurst School is celebrating pupils' GCSE success. Nearly 30% of grades are 7-9 and 90% of grades are grade 4 and higher, with 89% in Maths, 93% in English Literature and 85% in English language. Subjects including: Art, Graphics, Business, Drama, French, Geography, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Sociology and History recorded 100% grades 4-9. One third of all Maths grades were grades 7-9 and nearly 40% in individual sciences.

We are incredibly proud of our students who have shown remarkable perseverance and determination to achieve these grades. Their achievements reflect their personal development, hard work and commitment. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our teachers and support staff, whose dedication and expertise have been instrumental in guiding our students to success.

### **Drop-in Mornings for Parents in the Early Years and Juniors**

We aim to invite parents from Early Years to Year 6 into school once every half-term to attend a 'drop-in' morning. On these mornings, parents are able to come into the classroom and your children will show you the work they have been doing. The first 'drop-in' is scheduled to take place on Friday 20 September from 8.30-8.55am.

### **Breakfast Club**

Breakfast Club is available in the Early Years and Reception classroom for juniors and seniors from 7.30am. From 8.30am pupils should go straight to their classes or to the playground.

### **The Start and End of the School day from Wednesday 6 September**

The morning drop off for all pupils will be during a staggered arrival time of 8.30am to 8.40am. Years 5-11 should go straight to the playground, Years 1-4 should go straight to their classrooms and Early Years including Reception will be collected from the main gate. All pupils should be in class by 8.40am at the latest for registration to allow enough time to settle. Any pupils arriving after this time must report to the school office before going to their form room.

Senior pupils have clearly labelled bag racks where they should leave sports bags until their PE lesson, and leave their school bags during assembly, lunch and break times. Pupils may also have a locker and should see Mr Clair if they need to be allocated one.

Please see below the timings for the end to the day:

- Early Years and Reception at 3.15pm
- Years 1-3 at 3.25pm
- Years 4-6 at 3.30pm
- Years 7-9 at 3.40pm
- Years 10-11 at 3.45pm

### **Senior Pupils Arrival Arrangements**

- 7R use the front gates and go to room **28** (used to be 11), your form room (Senior ICT Room)
- 7SH use the front gates and go to room **30** (used to be 15), your form room (Geography Room)
- 8BK use the front gates and go to room **23** (used to be 18), your form room (Languages Room)
- 8O use the front gates and go to room **26** (used to be 21), your form room (Maths Room)
- 9B use the front gates and go to room **38** (used to be 5), your form room (Art Room)
- 9R use the single gate and go to room **17** (used to be 7), your form room (English Room)
- 10B use the front gates and go to room **34** (used to be 3), your form room (English Room)
- 10RJ use the single gate and go to room **10** (used to be 6), your form room (Science Lab)
- 11M use the front gates and go to room **31** (used to be 22), your form room (History Room)
- 11SE use the front gates and go to room **37** (used to be 4), your form room (Science Lab)

### **Reading Initiatives this year**

We will be continuing with the 'Gift a Birthday Book' scheme. Whilst this is not compulsory, we would like as many pupils and teachers as possible to be involved. On your child's birthday, they can donate a new copy of their favourite book to the school. We will add a book plate on the inside of the cover which acknowledges who has gifted the book to Normanhurst and the reason why they have chosen it. The books are presented in the weekly assemblies and then take their place in the junior library corner for other pupils to read.

### **ATOM Learning – Years 3-6**

Due to the success of ATOM Learning with years 4-6, this year we will be extending this to Year 3. This will be used in class and for some homework tasks. Atom Learning is a platform that we will use for homework tasks that will:

- Adapt as the pupils complete their homework
- Provide support with help sheets and video tutorials
- Boost progress

The platform will be introduced to the pupils in school first, so they feel comfortable before using it for homework.

All homework will continue to be set via our Seesaw platform, with Years 4-6 having access to ATOM Learning via a link, further details will follow. Years 1-3 will continue to be set tasks on Education City via Seesaw.

### **Year 11 Matters**

Year 11 mock exams will take place just before the Christmas holidays, with a second set of mock exams before Easter. Year 11 will have individual meetings with the Senior Leadership Team to help them set ambitious targets for their progress towards the final exams.

There is a sixth form transition meeting for parents and pupils on Wednesday 4 September at 5.00pm. All Year 11 parents and pupils should attend, as we will be providing information about the process of applying to sixth forms and further information about Year 11.

### **Year 10 Matters**

There is a meeting for all Year 10 parents on Thursday 5 September at 5.00pm when we will be outlining the GCSE programme and giving important information about the exams to parents and pupils. Year 10 families should make every effort to attend. This is an important meeting to enable parents to understand GCSEs, which have changed significantly from the exams they would have taken at school.

Year 10 will have their first set of mock exams in the first week back after the Easter Holidays, which will enable the pupils and staff to set targets for the summer term to ensure that all pupils are working for their best possible final grades in Year 11.

### **NSPA**

The NSPA continue to contribute in many ways to school life. Here are the dates for your diary, timings will follow:

- Monday 16 September – NSPA Meeting (via Zoom)

All parents are welcome to join the NSPA by contacting [normanhurstschoolpa@gmail.com](mailto:normanhurstschoolpa@gmail.com).

### **Uniform Matters**

The juniors should return to school in either their summer or winter uniform, they can continue to wear summer uniform for the first half term if the weather is still warm. Seniors return wearing the usual full uniform. All pupils are expected to wear the school PE kit; no other brands are allowed. Please ensure that your child has the right kit for allocated days.

One pair of plain stud earrings, one in each ear lobe, may be worn by pupils from Year 5 upwards. These must be plain silver or gold studs, small in size, and each pupil must take full responsibility for them, including removing them for PE lessons.

Pupils' hairstyles must be smart and suitable for school. As detailed in the Parents' Handbook, this means no coloured extensions. Any braiding should be one colour and close to the hair's natural colour. Hair should not include cut-in designs, or shaved patterns. Pupils' hair should be tied up throughout the school day.

### **Mobile phones in School**

Pupils in the juniors are not permitted to bring mobile phones or electronic devices into school.

Pupils in the seniors are not permitted to use their phones or have them switched on from the time they arrive on the school site until after they leave. Mobile phones should never be used in school, in class, in the playground or in the toilets. Our policy is to collect pupils' mobile phones during morning form time and they are kept securely until they are returned at the end of the school day.

The school does not take responsibility for any loss or damage to mobile phones and they are brought in at the pupil's own risk. If your son or daughter needs to contact you during the school day, they can go to the school office and they will facilitate any calls.

Please ensure your child understands these rules. Your support is much appreciated.

### **Watches and Pencil Cases**

This year there has been a slight amendment included in the Parent Handbook. Pupils are not to bring smart watches into school. This includes watches with any texting and calling facility.

Pupils are expected to bring in their own pencil case from Year 6 upwards. Pupils in years 1-5 will be provided with resources at school and therefore do not need to bring a pencil case into school.

### **Absences from School**

If your child is unwell and unable to attend school, please telephone the school office to report the absence to a member of the office team or email [absence@normanhurstschool.co.uk](mailto:absence@normanhurstschool.co.uk) by 9am. Please avoid booking medical, dental and orthodontic appointments in school time wherever possible; if this is not possible, please notify the school in advance with the appointment details by phone, email or letter.

Children are compulsory school age from Reception and should be in school every day. Any absence has to be authorised, whatever the reason. Absences because your child is ill need to be confirmed by email or letter. Please do not send your child into school if they are ill: you will be asked to collect your child if they are unwell in school.

Requests for absence during term time for other reasons can only be approved in exceptional circumstances. If you wish to request time out of school for such a reason, please contact the Office who will give you a 'request for absence' form which should be completed, returned to them or download it from the website; I will then confirm whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Requests should be made in advance.

May I also emphasise the importance of punctuality, not just in school, but in life beyond Normanhurst. When seniors go on to sixth form we are always asked for information about punctuality and the number or percentage of 'lates' recorded for pupils. This is why we encourage our seniors to ensure they are in school on time each day.

### **Absence from PE/Games Lessons**

If your child is in school but unable to participate in their PE or Games lesson, please send them into school with a note for the PE staff explaining the reason, or email the PE staff or School Office directly. Pupils will come to school wearing their PE kit. Pupils not participating will also need to wear their PE kit and go to the PE lesson with the rest of the class, even though they will not participate.

They will not need to bring their uniform into school on these days, except when they have swimming. When pupils have swimming, Juniors and Seniors will be expected to wear their school uniform and change back into their school uniform after swimming.

### **Extra-Curricular Opportunities**

The published programme of extra-curricular activities was sent to parents before the holiday. The programme of activities and clubs starts in the first full week of term Monday 9 September.

Breakfast club, afterschool Club and Homework Club all begin on Wednesday 4 September.

There will be a number of extra booster classes for Year 11, either during the lunch break or after school from 3.45-4.45pm, with the purpose of helping students make maximum progress this year and thus achieve the best grades possible in their GCSE examinations. It is very important that pupils attend these classes and I ask all Year 11 parents to support us by ensuring your son or daughter attends.

### **Homework Matters and Diaries**

We are continuing to use 'Show My Homework' called 'Satchel' for the senior pupils from for Year 7 to Year 11. We are continuing to use 'Seesaw' for the junior pupils.

From time to time there may be technical difficulties, but we will always work with the company to resolve any issues. This online platform has been invaluable for our online learning and shown how effective it can be.

New pupils and parents will receive their log-ins during the first week of term. Miss Stone (Head of Juniors) and Mr Clair (Head of Seniors) coordinate the scheme and they can assist you if you lose your log-in details or cannot access the site.

The homework timetable will be published so that both pupils and parents know when homework is scheduled for each subject. When there is a lengthier task, teachers will usually try to include a weekend so that there is time for the work to be completed. Quality of homework is a significant contributor to pupil achievement overall and we aim to set meaningful, challenging and helpful independent work for pupils to complete at home. Having a routine for the effective completion of this study will result in better progress for your children, so please encourage them to do homework well, in a suitable environment without distractions.

This is also a good opportunity to remind senior parents that we have senior homework club in school every evening from 3.45pm to 4.45pm; please encourage your child to attend.

GCSE pupils in Years 10 and 11 should be practising exam questions at home regularly. This makes a significant impact on outcomes in the final exams as students become more proficient at understanding what questions require.

The seniors will not have hard copies of diaries this year because all communications are now via 'Show My Homework' or email. The senior pupils will, however, have a note journal to write down important information throughout the day. The journal also has a reference section at the back with Mental Health pages included.

The junior pupils will continue with reading diaries to encourage regular reading and staff are as always available to meet parents face-to-face or via Zoom to discuss any issues relating to reading.

Junior parents received a welcome letter from the class teacher after the moving-up day last term, with details about homework, tests, topics and routines. This information included the days when PE or swimming kits are needed. If you are unsure about any of the junior routines, or if your child struggles to complete their homework in the time, or if there are any other difficulties, please talk to the class teacher so that we can ensure the work is appropriate for your child.

### Curriculum Matters

Curriculum overviews will be sent out during the first part of the term to advise you of the work your children will be doing in class. In the early years these are weekly and in the juniors these are sent out on a termly basis; for seniors you will have a long-term plan for the work, set out in half-termly units. I hope parents find these useful.

Parents in the Early Years (EYFS) will continue to have access to the 'Evidence Me' portal to enable them to see photos of their child's achievements and learning. Further details will be included in the weekly EYFS letter.

### New Parents Portal Access

New parents will receive an email this week with information about how to access the parent portal. The email will contain your username and password details. Please log on to check the portal and to confirm that your details are correct. If there are any difficulties, please email [support@oaktreeschools.co.uk](mailto:support@oaktreeschools.co.uk) or contact the school office.

### Year 3 Camp

The annual Oak-Tree Year 3 Camp held at Oaklands School takes place on Thursday 12 and Friday 13 September. Year 3 pupils will participate in an exciting and enjoyable adventure of activities on the two school fields. I know the Year 3 pupils are looking forward to it.

### Important Dates for the Diary

Wed 4 Sep		First Day of Autumn Term
	17:00 – 18:00	Y11 Post 16 Education Parent Meeting
Thu 5 Sep	15:45 – 16:45	EYFS RWI/Maths Parent Information Meeting
	17:00 – 18:00	Y10 Being Successful at GCSE Parent Meeting
Mon 9 – Fri 13 Sep		Y1-6 Baseline Tests
Wed 11 Sep	15:45 – 16:45	Y1-6 English & Maths Information Parent Meeting
Thu 12-Fri 13 Sep		Year 3 Overnight Camp at Oaklands
Thu 19 Sep		Individual Photographs
Fri 20 Sep	08:30 – 09:00	LK-Y6 Parents' 'Drop In' Morning
Tue 24 Sep	17:00 – 17:30	Y7 Meet the Teacher Parents' Meeting
Fri 27 Sep		MacMillan Coffee Morning
Mon 30 Sep	17:30 – 18:00	Battlefields Trip Parent Information Meeting

The Leadership Team, your child's form tutor or I are very happy to discuss any questions or concerns that may arise. Please do feel free to email or contact the school office if you would like to meet with us to discuss any issues.

With my very best wishes

Yours sincerely



Jacqueline Job  
Headmistress

